

Abstract of parallel session: 14

(2000 characters, including spaces)

Title: **Integrated care: moving beyond standard evaluations to bridge the gap between evidence and policy?**

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Integrated care interventions are typical examples of complex interventions. They are highly context-dependent, comprise multiple intervention components that interact with each other, include various actors, consider multiple outcomes, and often present non-linear interactions and emergent effects. Up to now, attention has focused on trying to determine whether such interventions are effective, relying on evidence-based medicine principles most of the time. However, in the context of complex interventions, standard process and outcome evaluations leave us with unanswered questions. Beyond the answer to “does it work?”, it is important to understand what works, how, for whom and under what circumstances. Despite the fact that “research evidence is just one form of knowledge that informs policy-makers”, research evidence remains key to policy making, especially when knowledge is useful. Theory-driven evaluations such as realist evaluations may provide an alternative perspective to the study and understanding of complex interventions. Ultimately, they can inform policy-making and help scaling-up of such interventions. After a brief description of what integrated care and complex interventions are, characteristics of realist evaluations will be presented. This presentation should be of interest to clinicians, researchers and other healthcare stakeholders dealing with integrated care or other complex interventions, at any level.